

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 PANAMA 06672 251726Z

42

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 003729

O 251700Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9224

S E C R E T PANAMA 6672

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: TALK WITH PRESIDENT LAKAS

REFS: (A) STATE 236526 (B) JORDEN-BELL TELECONS 9/23

1. I HAD A GOOD, FRANK AND FRIENDLY TALK WITH PRESIDENT LAKAS THIS MORNING. I TOLD HIM THAT WE WERE PUZZLED AND DISAPPOINTED WITH A NUMBER OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS--NOTABLY THE EFFORT TO PUT THE BLAME FOR DOMESTIC DISTURBANCES ON THE U.S. AND SOME RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY FOREIGN MINISTER BOYD. THE LATTER WERE PARTICULARLY DISTURBING INASMUCH AS THEY TENDED TO PLACE BLAME ON OUR PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE DELAY IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT WE WERE SOMEHOW BACKING AWAY FROM OUR COMMITMENT TO A TREATY. I SAID IT WAS SHOCKING THAT THE MINISTER SHOULD SUGGEST--UNLESS HE WAS BADLY MISQUOTED-- THAT WE MIGHT BE PLEASED WITH SOME KIND OF VIOLENT OUTBURST HERE WHICH WOULD PERMIT US TO ACT STRONGLY AGAINST PANAMA. I COVERED THE WHOLE RANGE OF MATTERS COVERED IN REFS A AND B.

2. THE PRESIDENT SAID HE WAS EMBARRASSED BY THESE TACTICS BECAUSE HE KNOWS THE U.S. WELL AND UNDERSTANDS FULLY OUR NEGATIVE REACTION. HE ASSURED ME THAT WE SHOULD NOT THINK THAT THESE THINGS IN ANY WAY AFFECTED PANAMA'S STRONG DESIRE FOR A TREATY AND FOR A RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS. HE SAID THAT HE DOUBTED THE MINISTER FAVORED MANY OF THE THINGS HE WAS SAYING BUT THAT HE WAS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 PANAMA 06672 251726Z

QUOTE FOLLOWING ORDERS UNQUOTE. IN OTHER WORDS, HE WAS OBEYING

GENERAL TORRIJOS. I SAID THAT MEANT THAT TORRIJOS WAS GETTING SOME VERY BAD ADVICE INDEED FROM PEOPLE WHO DID NOT REALLY UNDERSTAND THE U.S. AT ALL. THE PRESIDENT AGREED BUT SHRUGGED HIS SHOULDERS AND SAID THERE WAS LITTLE HE COULD DO. HE PROMISED TO LOOK FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE THE POINTS THAT WE HAD DISCUSSED. I TOLD HIM THAT I WAS SURE THAT AS LONG AS PANAMA, THROUGH ITS FOREIGN MINISTER, WAS BEATING THE PROPAGANDA DRUMS AS AT PRESENT, IT CLOSED OFF ANY POSSIBILITY OF RESUMING SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

3. LAKAS TOLD ME THAT FRUSTRATION WAS DOUBTLESS A LARGE PART OF THE EXPLANATION FOR TORRIJOS PRESENT MOOD. HE REMINDED ME THAT WE HAVE PROMISING A NEW TREATY FOR TWELVE YEARS. WE HAD INDICATED TWO YEARS AGO THAT WE THOUGHT A NEW ARRANGEMENT COULD BE WORKED OUT IN A YEAR OR SO. NOW WE ARE IN THE THIRD YEAR OF THE CURRENT ROUND AND IN PANAMANIAN EYES NOTHING WAS HAPPENING. I TOLD HIM WE UNDERSTOOD FULLY THIS FRUSTRATION. BUT I ASSURED HIM THAT THE BASIC COMMITMENT TO A NEW TREATY REMAINED VALID. ONCE THE ELECTORAL PROCESS WAS COMPLETED, I SAID I THOUGHT WE COULD EXPECT SERIOUS MOVEMENT. MEANTIME, I SAID THERE WERE MANY TECHNICAL PROBLEMS ON WHICH WE COULD AND SHOULD BE WORKING. THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM, I SAID, WAS THAT THE PANAMANIAN EFFORT TO PRESSURE US WORKED PRECISELY THE OPPOSITE WAY AND MADE IT VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO PANAMANIAN WISHES. THE PRESIDENT NODDED AND SAID HE WOULD DO WHAT HE COULD TO MAKE THIS VIEWPOINT KNOW IN THE INNER CIRCLES HERE.

(NOTE: I HAVE JUST DISCUSSED THE ABOVE WITH AMBASSADOR BUNKER BY PHONE.)

JORDEN

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CANALS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, NEGOTIATIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: blochd0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PANAMA06672
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760363-0492
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760920/aaaaarag.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Reference: 76 STATE 236526
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: blochd0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 JUL 2004 by ullricre>; APPROVED <29 OCT 2004 by blochd0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TALK WITH PRESIDENT LAKAS
TAGS: PFOR, PN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006